encroachments over about 64,000 hectare in the first phase. This proposal is now under process in the Ministry.

Expenditure on Ganga Action plan

2193. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ganga is still stinking despite ongoing pollution abatement work going on since 1985;

(b) the amount spent so far on Ganga Action Plan; and

(c) the action proposed to ask the State Governments to keep up the commitments under Ganga Action Plan (GAP)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The Ganga Action Plan Phase-I has been under implementation since 1985. The scheme has been closed on 31.3.2000. With the completion of works taken up under the first Phase, it has been possible to minimise the organic pollution reaching the Ganga river wherever the works have been made operational. However, there has been only an incidental reduction in the level of microbial pollution in the treated sewage reaching the river. This is due to the fact that technologies for reducing microbial pollution are either cost intensive or need large areas of land. Moreover, under the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, only about 35% of the pollution load presently being generated from all the towns along the river has been tackled. The remaining pollution load is to be tackled under the Ganga Action Plan Phase-II which is already under implementation. The Ganga Action Plan Phase-II covers pollution abatement works on Ganga and its major tributaries *viz.* Yamuna, Gomati and Damodar. As a result the impact of the first phase works of the Ganga Action Plan on river water quality is not adequately visible.

(b) The amount spent on the Ganga Action Plan so far is:

Ganga Action Plan Phase-I -Rs. 451.70 crore

Ganga Action Plan Phase-II -Rs. 467.69 crore

(c) The Government has asked the concerned State Governments to take the following steps under Ganga Action Plan Phase-II.

(i) State Governments have been asked to take advance action for land acquisition wherever applicable after which only the related schemes be approved. Release of Central grants and its utilisation by the State Government is monitored more vigorously to minimise instances of diversion of funds.

(ii) Release of Central grants under the second phase of Ganga Action Plan to Bihar was withheld for some time till a firm commitment from the State Government was available for providing adequate funds for operation and maintenance of the assets. The matter is also being pursued with the State Government of U.P. for adequate provision of funds for operation and maintenance of assets. Operation and maintenance of assets in West Bengal is generally satisfactory.

(iii) The State Governments have been asked to ensure continuous supply of electricity for assets through dedicated feeders wherever required.

(iv) To address the problem of microbial pollution, it has been decided to adopt land based technologies for sewage treatment wherever feasible and to utilise the treated wastewater for irrigation purposes.

Poaching of Wild Animals

†2194. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large scale poaching of elephants, lions and chittals is taking place in most of the forests and sanctuaries;

(b) whether this poaching is taking place in collusion with the forests officers; and

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† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

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